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Don Johnson

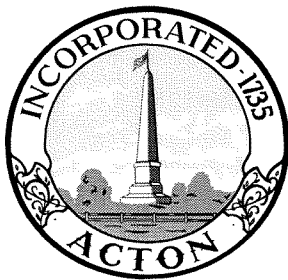
From: Peter Ashton
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2006 11:24 AM
To: Don Johnson; Christine Joyce
Subject: Draft ch 70 Letter

Don:

Here is my draft of the letter for the Board's approval Monday night re the Ch 70 proposal.

Peter

1/20/2006



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Peter K. Ashton, Chairman
Board of Selectmen

January 23, 2006

Senator Pamela Resor
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Resor,

The Board of Selectman has voted to support and endorse the proposal to reform Chapter 70 state aid to education to increase the minimum amount of aid to all communities to \$2,000 per student. We urge you to support this legislation as it is a win-win for all communities and would help restore the intent of EdReform when it was first passed in 1993. We understand that this proposal would hold all communities harmless, that is no communities would suffer a loss in Chapter 70 funding, and approximately 30 percent of the communities in the Commonwealth including Acton would benefit.

The proposal is an intelligent, well-conceived approach to reforming the outdated Chapter 70 formula. Chapter 70 aid has not kept up with the most basic of all economic realities: inflation. The theory of the proposal seeks to counter the effects that inflation has had on foundation budgets and minimum aid since 1993 which has shifted a significant portion of the funding of education onto the local property tax. In Acton, school enrollment increased rapidly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the decline in state aid has harmed not only the schools' ability to fund its budget, but it has also greatly harmed the ability of the municipal side of town government to fund its services. On an inflation-adjusted basis, state aid to Acton still lags 1999 levels. Since 2000, property taxes have risen about 50 percent in Acton while state aid has risen only 6 percent – state aid now accounts for about 10 percent of our budget whereas in 2000 it accounted for almost 14 percent of our budget. At a time when state revenues are up, it is time for the state to help all communities alleviate some of the increased burden that has been placed on local communities and local property owners to fund basic services.

Thus far the proposal has received significant support from other communities and we urge you and other legislators to work hard to seek passage of this proposal as a means of giving fair treatment to all communities.

Very truly yours,

Peter K. Ashton
Chairman

cc: William Ryan, Superintendent
Acton Public School Committee